

GRANDE PRAIRIE

ALBERTA, CANADA

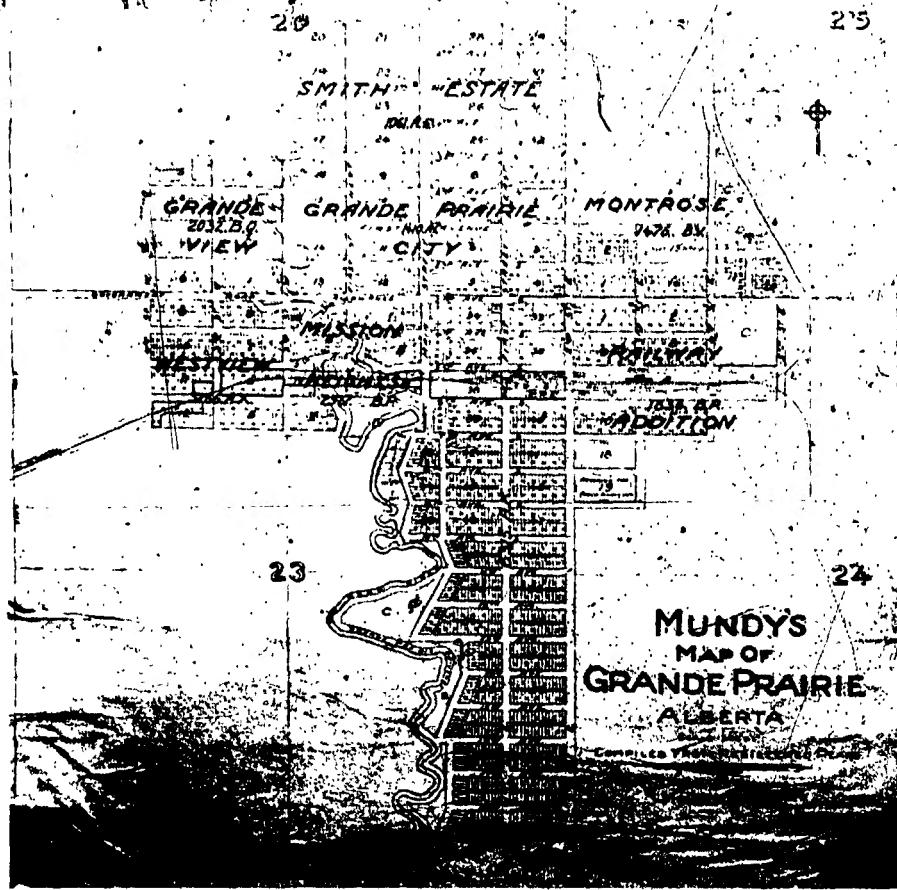


RICHMOND AVENUE, MAIN BUSINESS STREET, GRANDE PRAIRIE, ALBERTA.

—Photo by Rex Harper

The . . . AGRICULTURAL
WHOLESALE DISTRIBUTING
RETAIL SHOPPING
EDUCATIONAL, JUDICIAL
GOVERNMENTAL
CULTURAL AND SPORTS

CENTRE of THE PEACE RIVER DISTRICT



For FULL INFORMATION REGARDING PROPERTY SITES, BUSINESS
AND INDUSTRIAL POSSIBILITIES, WRITE TO:

THE SECRETARY, CHAMBER OF COMMERCE,
GRANDE PRAIRIE, ALBERTA.

INTRODUCTION

HISTORICAL

Situated in the southern half of the rich agricultural Peace River country of Northern Alberta, Grande Prairie is at once the largest and most important town in the entire area. It is the wholesale distributing centre, the retail shopping centre, the educational, judicial, government, cultural and sports centre for the district, which extends over a fifty miles radius.

Forty years ago (1908) the Peace River country was only a romantic name, a wilderness of bush and muskeg and parkland without even a trail into it. Rail transportation stopped at Edmonton, between four and five hundred miles away by existing water and bush routes. Roads went little farther. "Le Grande Prairie" was not a town but a district extending for miles of lush park and open prairie where the Indians roamed in search of furs and food.

It was Alexander Mackenzie's search for fur and a western outlet to the Pacific in 1792-93 that first brought the name of Peace River to public notice. For the explorer-furtrader was also an author, and his "Journals" tell of the beauty, fertility and abundance of game in the valleys of the Peace. It was the name "Peace" which probably fired the imagination of the first pioneers who trekked by the hundreds with team and oxen over terrible summer trails or bitter cold winter trails to the new land of promise from around 1910 to 1916.

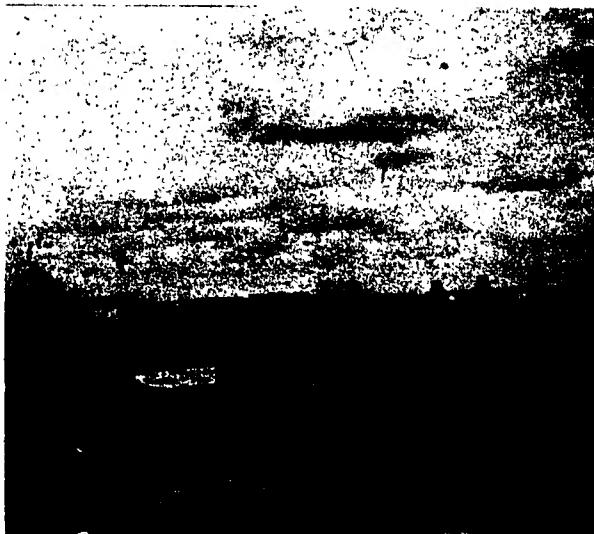
18
7/12/37
-10-16

The promise of rail transportation was also a factor. In 1916 the hurrying rails had reached from Edmonton to Grande Prairie by way of Spirit River and the first train chugged into the bustling frontier settlement. Another ten years and the frontier aspects had disappeared with the growing importance of the town as the centre of a rich farming district where world championship grain was already being grown on the Herman Trelle farm. Twenty years after that Grande Prairie was still the largest town in the Peace River country and expanding rapidly with the continued development of the district following the late war.

GRANDE PRAIRIE TODAY

Surrounded by lovely rolling farmlands, close to three big river systems, many lakes and wooded areas, Grande Prairie now has a population of almost 3,500 which is increasing daily. It has large busy wholesale and retail establishments, fine homes, three banks and a treasury branch, a radio station, weekly newspaper; two public and two high schools, a 44-bed Municipal Hospital, a public library, soon to be housed in a new building, ten churches, three hotels, a moving picture theatre, large new curling rink and swimming pool, finished in 1947 through community effort, a golf club, skating rink, sports ground, recreation centre, reserve army armories, and many other attractions.

Its community spirit is shown by its many active service clubs, its response to all humanitar-



Dam and part of reservoir, Grande Prairie, Alberta, with town in background. Reservoir covers 100 acres to an average depth of ten feet. Filled for first time, spring of 1947.
—Photo by Art Craft, Grande Prairie.



Court House, Grande Prairie sub judicial district.
—Photo by Rex Harper.

70.3.25/3



Richmond Hill Golf and Country Club overlooks 10 lakes in the Grande Prairie district. — Photo Courtesy Herald-Tribune.

ian appeals, its Teen Town, musical, cultural, dramatic and church groups.

Serving the town and community professionally are three doctors, two dentists, two lawyers, and chartered accountants. A sub-judicial district, Grande Prairie has the court house, the sheriff, the police magistrate, R.C.M.P. headquarters, and holds monthly district and semi-annual supreme court sittings.

Government offices include the Provincial Department of Public Works with resident engineer, Department of Agriculture with District Agriculturist and Home Economist, Dept. of Lands and Mines, Dept. of Education with School Supervisor, Department of Industrial Relations, Forestry Service, Liquor Vendor.

Dominion Government office include Department Veterans Land Act, Regional; Department National Defence (Reserve); R.C.A.F. North West Air Command detachment; Depart-

ment of Transport with Civil Aviation Division, radio range and weather, etc.; Dominion Government Telegraph.

Grande Prairie has an expanding water and sewer system, civic owned, with a dam and reservoir which covers 100 acres, to a depth of over 10 feet to supply water for a town many times larger than the present, filtration and disposal plants, well lighted streets, paving and cement sidewalks on the main business street, adequate fire and police protection.

The Canadian Utilities with a modern oil burning plant, central generating station supplies electricity to 1,000 homes and business places in the town and district. In 1947 a programme of rural electrification was begun and farms in these districts and on the main transmission lines are being connected to the local plant. A new unit is being installed to bring the plant capacity to 2,350 H.P.



Junior Calf Club Show, Grande Prairie District, Grande Prairie, Alberta.

— Photo Courtesy Herald-Tribune

THE POOL elevator that charts its outline against the evening sky may be considered the farmers' Statue of Liberty. It is true no outstretched arm bearing a torch reaches aloft from the tall silent figure. That torch is carried by the more than 100,000 members of Saskatchewan Co-operative Producers Limited, the vanguard of whom twenty-one years ago laid the foundations for a great co-operative marketing organization.

The liberty which those storehouses symbolize was won for the farmers of Saskatchewan by their own efforts. It is a liberty for which they had to work and fight. Standing as they do—in more than 1,100 communities and dedicated to the service of mankind, these structures serve as monuments to commemorate the drive and foresight and determination on the part of Saskatchewan farmers to improve their lot by doing things for themselves.

Twenty-one years ago the Wheat Pool was organized. The formation of this marketing co-operative was not the beginning of a story, it was another chapter in a story that had been started by far-seeing men a quarter of a century earlier.

The turn of the century had found the great wheat land being opened up and brought under cultivation. Railroad lines were being pushed into new territories. The golden riches of wheat was the gold at the foot of the rainbow that held out to settlers promise of security and prosperity; but they had reckoned without the factors that were to thwart them in their quest of home and happiness.

They found that they could grow the world's best wheat, but that they were at the mercy of marketing monopolies that dictated terms of sale and price. Too frequently the production of the best wheat in the world brought them only the heartache of penury and suffering.

They had no alternative but to sell their grain to the marketing monopolies. They planted in the spring not knowing to what depth prices would fall through the manipulations of speculative grain trading. They could only hope for the best. Too frequently they got the worst.

CROPPING CONDITIONS

The climate of the Grande Prairie district may fairly be judged by meteorological records taken at the Dominion Experimental Station commencing 1915. The mean annual precipitation is 17.37 inches, of which 10.27 inches falls in the period April to September inclusive. Snowfall averages 65 inches. The mean annual temperature is 35.92 degrees, which is higher than the recorded temperature of most Manitoba and Saskatchewan points. The wind velocity averages 8.3 miles per hour.

While there are great variations in rainfall the evaporation is relatively low and the clay loam soil underlain by light clay result in its efficient utilization. Crop yields vary with the rainfall but there are no outstanding crop failures and feed is never entirely lacking. At Beaverlodge Station the long-term average yields on summer fallow run: Thatcher wheat 31, Victory oats 81, Olli barley 46, Redwing flax 14.6, Kharkov winter wheat 28.7, and fall rye 40 bushels per acre. Under normal commercial conditions these yields would probably be reduced by 10 per cent.

Alfalfa, sweet clover and brome are the principal forage crops of the district and are grown extensively both for hay and pasture and as seed crops. Seed crops are also taken from creeping red fescue, alsike and Altaswede red clover. In fact seed production from cereal and forage crops constitutes a major source of revenue and is a tribute to the type of farming practiced. Hay yields of a brome-alfalfa mixture, for instance, average 1.75 tons per acre and supplement sheaf oats in the feeding of live stock.



Self propelled Combines at work on farm in Beaverlodge district for a modern harvest. (About 30 miles west of Grande Prairie.)

—Photo Courtesy Beaverlodge Station.

Standard garden crops do well and are noted for their superior flavour. Early varieties of tomatoes may ripen a portion of their crop and table corn is obtained by making special effort but vine crops are less dependable. Small fruits are an important part of the farm garden and the results from the orchard at the Beaverlodge Station indicate that some tree fruits show almost as much promise. The station is making a success in growing apples and crabapples and is having encouraging results from plums, cherries, pears and apricots.



Beaverlodge Experimental Station, 30 miles west of Grande Prairie. House and lawn from the south-east, July 1st.

—Photo by W. A. Albright

DISTRIBUTION

During the 1946-47 season the four grain elevators in Grande Prairie shipped a total of 465,-358 bushels of grain; divided into 278,372 bushels of wheat, 161,017 bushels of oats, 10,928 bushels of barley, 4,953 bushels of rye and 288 bushels of flax, representing a value of approximately \$600,-000, in spite of a dry year with early frost damage. Sexsmith, 15 miles north has seven elevators and is the largest shipping centre in the Dominion. Other nearby towns have from three to six elevators. Annual grain shipments have gone as high as 28 million bushels from the Peace River country.

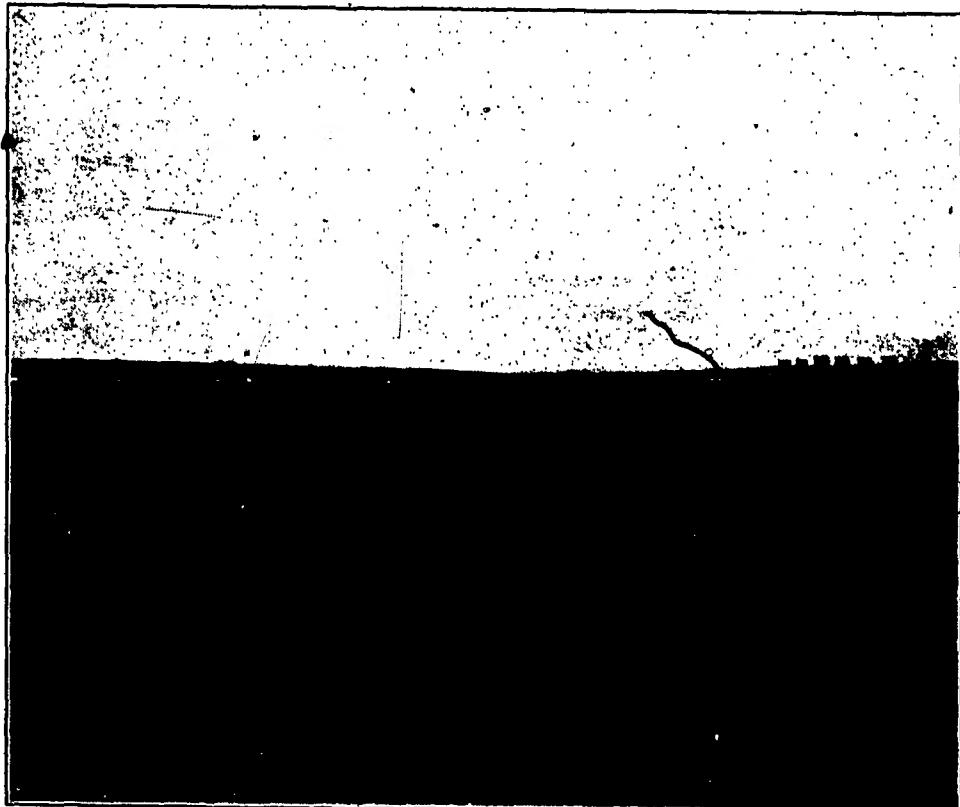
The Peace River Seed Growers have just completed a fourth floor to their modern seed cleaning plant in Grande Prairie and their annual turnover is approximately \$525,000. Cleaned seed is shipped to all parts of the world, some for European reconstruction. This business has made impressive growth during the past ten years. Em-

ploying 29 men, two million pounds of forage crop seeds and 25-30 cars of cereals are cleaned and shipped annually from the plant. Plans are being considered to double capacity and output.

A new, modern up-to-date seed cleaning plant is being opened at Hythe in 1948 which is being built up to nearly the size of the Grande Prairie plant in the near future.

Grande Prairie is the main distributing centre of the entire Peace River country. In volume of goods handled it ranks fourth in Alberta. There are 25 wholesale distributors located in town; all of them branches of national wholesale houses. Some 40 commercial travellers make this their headquarters.

The retail section has large modern well stocked stores which supply not only the town but a considerable portion of the purchases of the surrounding farming district and smaller towns. The latest addition is the quick freeze plant with four hundred all steel lockers opened in January, 1948. The Hudson's Bay has purchased a site and is now



Wheatfield at Harvest Time, near Beaverlodge, West of Grande Prairie.

—Photo Courtesy Herald-Tribune.



Northern Alberta Dairy Pool Plant at Grande Prairie, Alberta, handles 7,000 lbs. milk, 12,500 lbs. cream capacity

beginning construction of a department store. The McLeod firm of chain store hardware are now established here.

To serve a motoring public which includes hundreds of American tourists daily since the war and the building of the Alaska Highway, Grande Prairie has a dozen modern garages, well equipped and staffed. Agencies for all well known makes of cars and implements are also established, complete with servicing.

A large new hotel, the York is now under construction. Three other hotels serve the travelling public. An auto court with 12 cabins and two five-roomed houses last year registered 3,000 travellers from every State in the Union as well as Canadians.

The Northern Alberta Dairy Pool's new Creamery here can handle 7,000 pounds of milk daily in its two up-to-date pasteurizers. 12,500 pounds of cream go into the butter processing room; the churn has a 1,200 pound capacity every three hours. Ice cream equipment is installed.

The Alberta Poultry Producers opened a large modern plant in 1947 with a capacity of 2,000 dozen eggs and one thousand birds killed daily. Carleton Hatcheries, built in 1946, has a capacity of 60,000 eggs, all from approved flocks in the district. 12,000 chicks are shipped weekly during the season.

PAGE EIGHT

INDUSTRY

Second to agriculture in contributing to the growth of Grande Prairie is lumbering. The first planing mill was built early in the war and has expanded enormously. A second planing mill was established in 1947. Twenty-five lumber mills scattered in the bushland miles from town keep a steady stream of logs rolling to the mills by truck. Besides giving employment to hundreds of men, the lumber industry has opened up districts and built roads into them. The finished lumber is shipped to all parts of Canada and the United States and other parts of the world.

There are also tie camps and pulp wood camps in the district. Coal seams close to town have as yet been barely scratched but when operating capital is available, the coal industry will become an important one. Transportation is a problem as yet.

All local brick requirements are supplied by the growing Brick Yard just outside town with a capacity of 20,000 bricks daily during the season. Bricks are also shipped to many parts of the district, and are of excellent quality clay mixed with sand.

Gravel and sand deposits are found nearby and the product used in roads and construction work. The Concrete Works manufacture tiles for culverts and are kept busy with road construction. The Iron Works specializes in large brush cutters and pilers.

Two modern dry cleaning plants, a glass works, paint and body works, radiator company, electrical and radio shops, are some of the newer industries recently opened in Grande Prairie.

The Northern Bottling Works manufactures soft drinks.



Canadian Utilities Power Plant, Grande Prairie, Alberta. Central Generating Station for town and district.

TRANSPORTATION

Because of its geographical position, north of the transcontinental railways and highways, transportation has always been one of the biggest handicaps with which the Peace River country has had to deal. But in less than thirty years it changed over from oxcarts to airplanes. Grande Prairie is one of the stations on the famous North West Staging Route to the Arctic and beyond to the Orient. It has a five-million dollar airport occupying eleven hundred acres with runways sixty-five hundred feet long, maintained by the Department of Transport and the R.C.A.F. Commercial airlines radiate to Edmonton, Vancouver and Yellowknife.

The Northern Alberta Railway connects the district with Edmonton and Dawson Creek as well as all points in the Peace River country. From Edmonton a highway, mostly gravelled, connects through Grande Prairie with the Alaska Highway. District roads are being improved steadily. A bus line also operates to Edmonton and points in the Peace River country to Dawson Creek, B.C. Daily plane, train and bus service make travel speedy and pleasant. When the Hart highway from Dawson Creek to Vancouver, B.C., is completed in 1948, Grande Prairie will be connected with the newest and most scenic highway through the Rockies and the first Pacific Coast outlet for the Peace.

Truck service is also maintained and will increase.



Hauling logs to the planing mills at Grande Prairie, Alta.



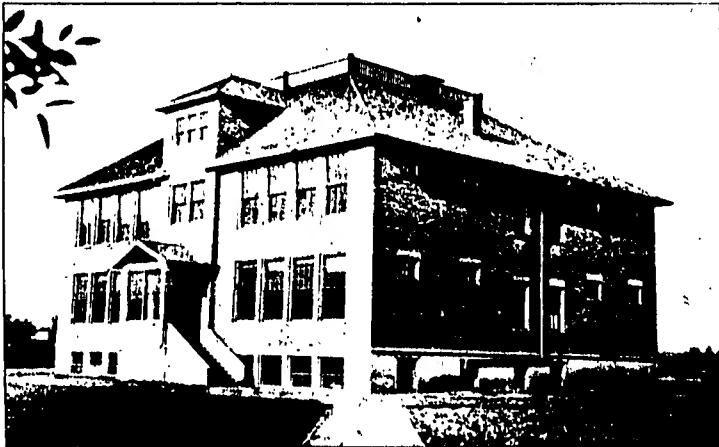
Logs piled in mill yard of lumber camp in the bush North of Grande Prairie, Alberta.

COMMUNICATION

Once isolated, Grande Prairie is now connected with Edmonton and the rest of the world by telegraph, telephone and teletype, the latter at the local radio station, CFGP. Telegraph service is supplied by Dominion Government Telegraphs and Northern Alberta Railway. The Canadian National Telegraph operates the former Alaska Telephone line while the telephone is owned by the Province of Alberta. News is broadcast over CFGP with a power of 1,000 watts. Local news is distributed through the weekly newspaper, the Herald Tribune, with the second largest weekly circulation in Alberta.



Ties waiting for shipment along the N.A.R. tracks, north of Grande Prairie, Alberta. There are other tie camps in the district.



Montrose Public School

Photo Courtesy Herald-Tribune

SCHOOLS

An up-to-date Composite High School will be started in 1948 and will cost approximately \$240,000. This will be the second Composite High in Alberta, the first being in Red Deer. At present there is a public grade and high school and a R.C. Separate grade and high school with a total school population of nearly 800 pupils and a staff of 25 teachers, including Shop and Home Economics. In 1912 when the first school was started in Grande Prairie, there were only 13 pupils. More accommodation is needed.

CHURCHES

With ten churches of as many denominations, the spiritual welfare of all citizens is adequately cared for. All churches report overcrowding since the war and plans for larger buildings are under consideration for at least four of them. All denominations work well together in community enterprises.



St. Joseph's Separate School, Grande Prairie, Alberta.

—Photo Courtesy Herald-Tribune.



Nurses' Residence, Municipal Hospital, Grande Prairie, Alberta
—Photo Courtesy Herald-Tribune

HOSPITAL

The Grande Prairie Municipal Hospital (44 beds), is well staffed and equipped with the most modern appliances for the care of the sick. It is served by five doctors and is the major hospital for doctors in all surrounding towns. The nurses' residence is one of the finest in the Province.

Financed by taxation from a large district, rates are low and the hospital is in a sound finan-

cial position. A 36-bed addition will be built in 1948. Smaller maternity and medical hospitals are at Beaverlodge, Sexsmith and Hythe, the latter a sub-hospital from Grande Prairie.

An Old Persons' Home site has been obtained just outside Grande Prairie and the building will be opened in 1948 as a joint town and district project.



Grand Prairie Hospital.

—Photo Courtesy Herald-Tribune.

RECREATION

There is variety and enjoyment in the many forms of recreation in and around Grande Prairie. In the summer there is golf at the Richmond Hill Golf and Country Club, seven miles west, one of the most scenic golf courses in Canada, overlooking three large lakes and seven smaller lakes, with distant mountain peaks to the south and some of the finest farms in the Peace River country stretching to the blue distance. Nearby lakes and rivers and the Wapiti river park provide picnic and camping grounds. A new swimming pool has just been completed in Grande Prairie by Kinsmen through community effort (1948). A theatre,

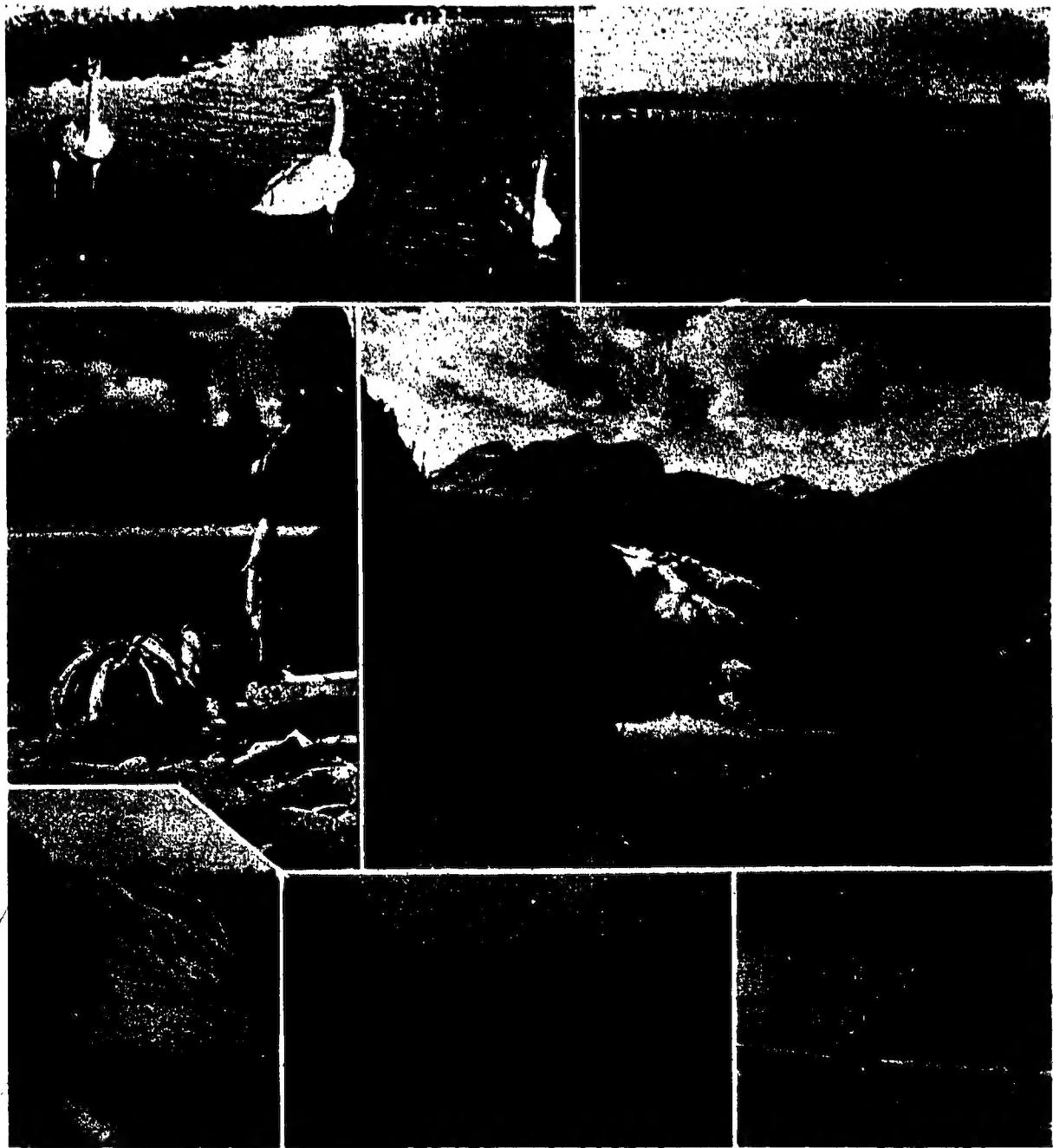
recreation centre for bowling, etc., tennis courts, ball park supply amusement for young and old. Sports Days and Stampede annually add spice. Dances in the fine Armouries (D Co'y, L.E.R.) auditorium and amateur plays, the Musical Festival and other musical events add to the interest.

The winters may be long but never dull, with hockey, skating and curling. The curling rink is a new six-sheet building and one of the finest in Alberta, built by the curlers' efforts. Ski trails and other snow sports attract many. A new ice arena will shortly be built.



Wild Geese are plentiful in Grande Prairie and District.

—Photo Courtesy Herald-Tribune



1. Rare Trumpeter Swans which nest only in the Grande Prairie District, these cygnets became very tame on a dugout of the J. Tomshack farm, 6 miles north of Grande Prairie, Alberta. 2. Stony Lake, in the Monkman Pass, south-west of Grande Prairie and not far from a large discovery of natural gas. 3. Fish are plentiful in the Murray River, just above the Kinuseo Falls, in the Monkman Pass, south of Grande Prairie, Alberta. (Photo by R. E. Leake, Benverlodge.) 4. Photo by R. E. Leake, Kinuseo Falls on Murray River, B.C., with old Stony-Faced-Indian on guard. Falls are 210 feet high, 300 feet wide. 5. Close-up of the Kinuseo Falls, 210 feet high, on the Murray River in the Monkman Pass, south of Grande Prairie, Alberta. 6. Beautiful Monkman Lake near the summit of Monkman Pass in the Rockies south of Grande Prairie, Alberta. 7. Saskatoon Lake, popular summer resort 15 miles west of Grande Prairie, Alberta.

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

The Alaska Highway is doubtless the biggest tourist attraction for hundreds of motorists who pass daily through Grande Prairie headed north for Alaska and the Yukon. There are no longer any travel restrictions on the Alaska Highway and accommodation while simple, is adequate. Soon the Hart Highway will be completed to Vancouver. In the meantime there is splendid motoring into the mountains west of Dawson Creek. Both these routes have lovely lakes and rivers and unsurpassed scenery. Fish is plentiful. Big game hunters outfit here for the big game country to the south. There are unclimbed mountains and unexplored valleys for the adventurous.

Closer to Grande Prairie is the Monkman Pass. In 1937 a road into the pass was begun by community effort to prove its claim as the shortest and easiest route to the Pacific. Eighty miles of passable road was built without machinery of any kind and log cabins for tourists were erected besides the marvellous Kinuseo Falls on the Murray river, 210 ft. high and over 300 feet wide, one of the unknown scenic wonders of the Rockies. Beyond by pack trail is Monkman Lake, a second Lake Louise. Easily reached by car is Stony Lake, which has been the setting out point for many survey and geological parties since the war.

Sturgeon Lake, 60 miles east, is a lovely spot on the highway to Edmonton, with cabins and stores, close to an Indian reserve and Mission schools. It is an ideal fishing and duck and goose hunting spot. In fact, all the lakes in the district close to town bring their quota of hunters from Canada and the United States in duck and goose hunting season.

The lakes within a few miles of Grande Prairie are one of the very few nesting places in North America for the rare Trumpeter Swans. These beautiful birds have been coming to these lakes for hundreds of years before the white man came. Nearby, too, are ancient sea bottoms from which specimens of dinosaurs and marine life of a bygone age are being dug. One such area has been set aside as a park by the Municipality, Kleskun Hill Park.



One of the largest and noblest river systems in Canada, the Peace River, must be seen with its steep cliff banks and wide, deceptively smooth water. It is the third largest river in Canada, being next to the Mackenzie in size. The Smoky river too, has rugged charm. Both it and its tributary, the Wapiti, which is close to town, have high banks.

WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

No one who has noted the rapid yet solid expansion of Grande Prairie since the end of the war can doubt that it has an assured future. For most of 1947 and on into 1948 the Herald Tribune, the local weekly, was able to announce one new business establishment being opened or improvements and additions being made to others, almost every week, a record hard to equal. National concerns which have opened branches in Grande Prairie in that time include T. Eaton Co. Ltd., Ashdown Hardware, Macleod's Hardware, Union Tractor and Equipment, Motor Car Supply, Taylor and Pearson, Fairbanks-Morse, and the Hudson's Bay Co. which is building a department store. Other firms are scouting around.

With a dam and filtration plant capable of servicing a city of 10,000, the faith shown by these companies seems well justified. There is room and opportunity for big or small business in this growing town, and both are welcome and encouraged. Professional men, especially doctors, lawyers, dentists, and engineers would do well to look into the possibilities of establishing here.

The Imperial Oil Co. Ltd. have been conducting a thorough and intensive seismograph survey

with headquarters in Grande Prairie for the past year. They will drill their first well in 1948, possibly less than 20 miles north of town. Should oil be struck and a new oil field be opened up as at Leduc a year ago, the possibilities for the future can be imagined. They too have faith.

The largest gas field in western Canada is off the Monkman trail, about 80 miles south of Grande Prairie, according to Dr. G. S. Hume, chief federal geologist. Work will start on that field in the summer of 1948. Coal and other minerals are known to exist in the mountains also.

The Grande Prairie Chamber of Commerce welcomes any and all enquiries about the town and district, whether from tourists or business men. To the best of their ability they will give detailed information to those interested.

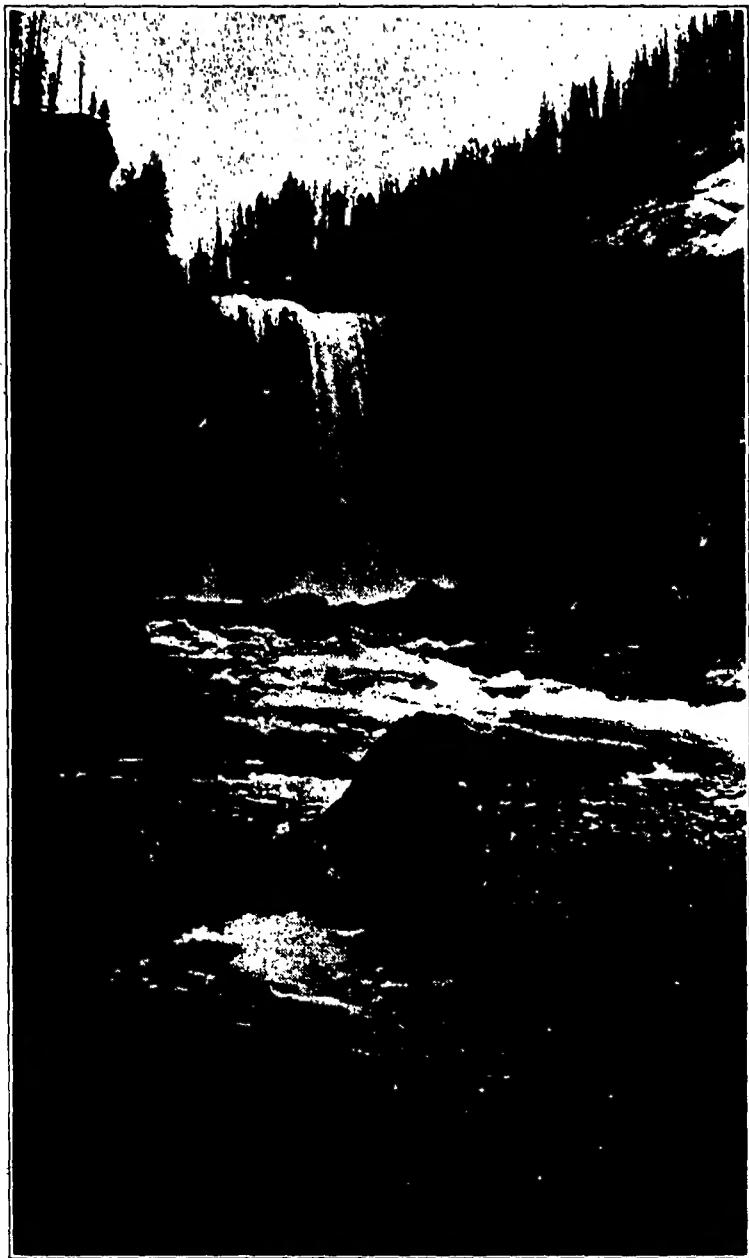
Address your letters to

The Secretary,

Grande Prairie Chamber of Commerce,

Grande Prairie, Alberta, Canada.





**Porcupine Falls, South-west of Grande Prairie.
In the Big Game country.**

—Photo Courtesy Herald-Tribune.